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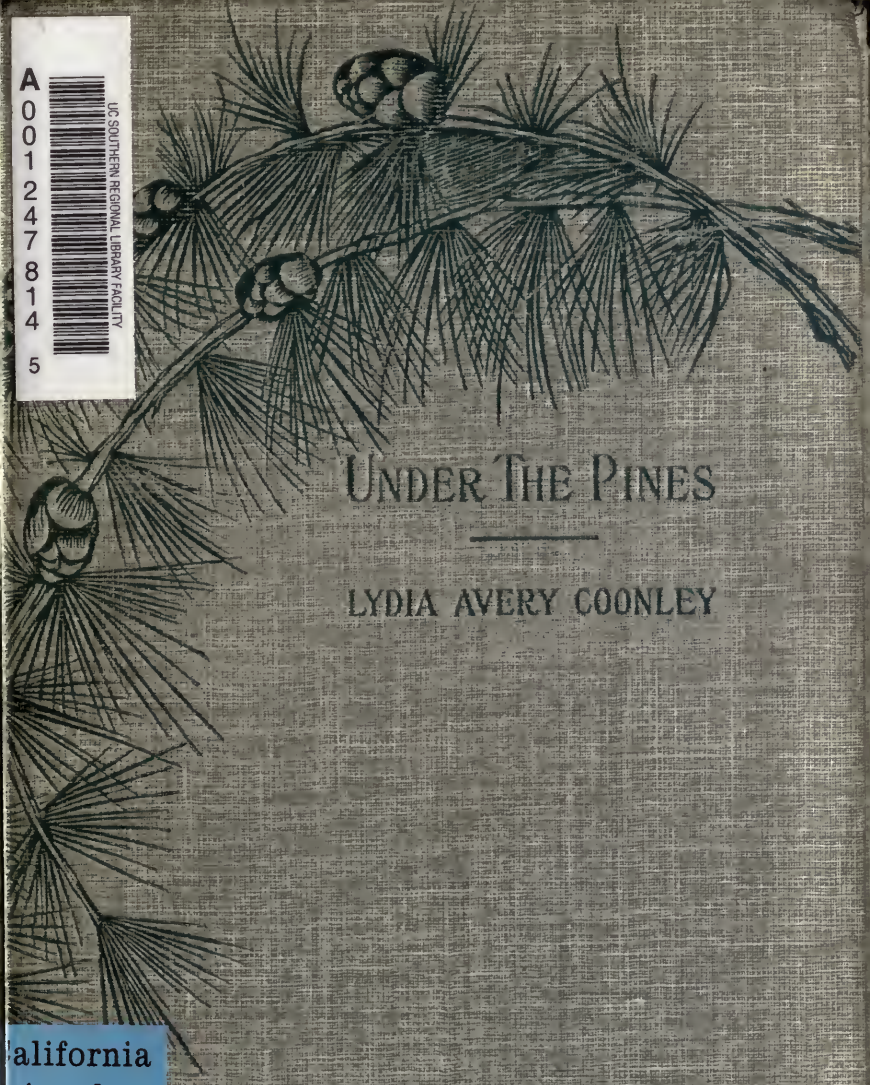

UNDER THE PINES

LYDIA AVERY COONLEY

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Poetry

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UNDER THE PINES

AND OTHER VERSES

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AND OTHER VERSES

BY

LYDIA AVERY COONLEY

CHICAGO
WAY & WILLIAMS
1895

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Under the Pines	9
Song	11
The Forest Samson	12
Behind the Deed	14
Heredity	15
Arcady	16
A Mother's Class-Day Wishes	18
Earth to Air	20
Wait	22
Cremation	23
The World Made New	24
The Vision	26
Mahomet's Choice	27
To a Malachite Geode	28
Ixtaccihuatl and Popocatepetl	30
Apple Blossoms	32
Unto Your Enemy	34
Joy	35
Lotus	36
The Love that Forgives	38
To-Day	39

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PAGE

Oriole 40
Roses 42
In Air 43
Orchid 44
California 46
Naushon 48
The Heart's Song 50
The Truth Shall Make You Free . . . 51
Love's Power 52
Good 54
Mexican Song 55
Always Spring 56
Long, Long, Ago 58
O Beautiful Day 60
The Dawn of a Day 61
I Love You, Dear 62
Alone 64
Judge Not 65
God's Children 66
Why Fear 68
With God 69
The Boom of the Lake on the Gray Sea Wall 70
Milton Hill 72
My Neighbor 73
Song for a Golden Wedding 74
Coronado 76
Hymn 79

PAGE

Ninetieth Psalm 80
February 82
April 84
June 86
September 88
October 90
Good Bye, Old Year 92
'As a Man Thinketh' 93
Sunny Brae 94
Twilight 96
Lake to Sky 98
We Two 100
The Letter 102
Old Proverbs in a New Dress 103

My little book, your lines were born
In rifts of busy times;
No travail pains of solitude
Brought forth these simple rhymes.
They have no plan, no moral hid,
No prize for one who delves;
They came from out a happy heart,
And seemed to sing themselves.

UNDER THE PINES.

Under the pine tree a gay hammock swings,
Up in its branches a tiny bird sings;
Down through the pine-needle clusters of green
Filter the sunbeams, with blue sky between.

Under the hammock lies carpet of brown,
Made of pine needles the breezes blew down,
Perfumed by its own heart, dyed by the snow,
Padded and tufted above and below.

Swing in the hammock, and what do you see?
Silver Lake smiling near blue Ossipee;
On the horizon, in high curving lines,
Mountains that rise over forests of pines.

Swing in the hammock, and what do you hear?
Secrets the birds confide, whispering near,
Chirping of crickets and humming of bees,
Song of the breezes among the pine trees.

Wish, now! oh, wish from the hammock, my
dear!
'All through the summer days let me swing here,
Seeing the mountains in blue curving lines,
Breathing the breath of the fragrant green pines;

'Gazing above to the blue of the sky,
Bending to touch the pine mat, brown and dry,
Listening to bird-notes and whirring of wings,
Till with earth's gladness my happy heart sings.'

Swing in the hammock! Oh, swing, swing away!
What can compare with a blue summer day?
Sorrow and care may smooth out all their lines
When the dear hammock swings under the pines.

SONG.

I.

WHY are the skies so softly blue,
The meadows jewelled o'er with dew?
Why are the trees all emerald-green,
The lake a smile of silver sheen?
Do you not know, O Lover mine,
Why earth is decked in robes divine?
It is the springtime of the year,
And spring is in our hearts, my dear.

II.

Alas! the clouded skies are cold,
The meadows dark with earthy mold,
The leafless trees stand brown and dry,
Gray is the lake 'neath grayer sky.
O Lover lost, with every breath
Do you not mourn these signs of death?
It is the winter of the year,
Its frost has touched our hearts, my dear.

THE FOREST SAMSON.

LIKE Samson shorn the bare trees stand,
Their branches dark against the sky,
Their strength forgotten by the band
Of thoughtless, careless passers-by.

They wait in silence till the tide
Of joyous life begins to flow,
And over branches spreading wide
Their sign of strength, the green leaves grow.

So Samson waited till his hair
In all his shaven locks grew long,
And answered to his silent prayer:
'Thou, Nazarite, again art strong.'

Then called he on avenging heaven,
Within the temple bowed his head
And clasped the pillars; walls were riven
And he lay in the ruins — dead.

But our great trees, with strength renewed,
Build forest temples, and the breath
Of summer winds chants through their aisles
The prophet's song — There is no death!

BEHIND THE DEED.

'Why should I work? Why should I strive?
The world is wrong,' you say, and sigh.
'My drop of good is swept away
By tides of evil rising high!'

Ah, no! the beat of every heart
That throbs for right is felt afar;
Each kindly deed, each joyful gift,
Speeds hope and courage like a star.

The spirit stands behind the deed,
In holy thought the dream must start;
And every cause that moves the world
Was born within a single heart.

HEREDITY.

WHY bowest thou, O soul of mine,
  Crushed by ancestral sin?
Thou hast a noble heritage,
  That bids thee victory win.

The tainted past may bring forth flowers,
  As blossomed Aaron's rod;
No legacy of sin annuls
  Heredity from God.

ARCADY.

WHERE do the roses bloom
All the round year?
You have the calendar,
Tell me, my dear!

Pink as the sea-shell's heart
Crimson as Cupid's dart,
Snowy in bridal white,
Yellow with amber light,—

Where do the roses bloom?
Tell me, my dear.
Only in Arcady —
Arcady's here!

Where do acacias show,
Through rifts of green,
Blue of the summer sky
Shining between?

Leaflets that kissed too much,
Shrink from love's tender touch;
Flower-cups whose golden spray
Clings to the sun's last ray?

Where do acacias bloom?
Tell me, my dear!
Only in Arcady —
Arcady's here!

Where does the heart keep young
All through the year?
You know the secret well,
Tell me, my dear!

Just where each day makes room
Gladly for roses' bloom;
Just where acacias hold
Drops of the sunset's gold.

Where does the heart keep young?
Tell me, my dear!
Only in Arcady —
Arcady's here.

A MOTHER'S CLASS-DAY WISHES.

FAIR Harvard's Class Day. Ivied walls
Give Nature's grace to stately halls,
And sun and shadow play between
The ancient trees upon the green.

Her roll tenacious Memory calls,
And summons to these trysting halls
Her noble sons, whose names are told
On history's page in stars of gold.

The poet meets the statesman here,
The sage stands close beside the seer,
And heroes come from quiet sleep
Where Memory tenderest watch doth keep.

Then shadowy forms fade into air,
The present triumphs everywhere;
And youth and beauty flash their smiles
When black-robed seniors crowd the aisles.

I know it all! The glorious star
Of Harvard shines from near and far;
And yet to-day in all the town
I only see one cap and gown.

My son! — for you I do not ask
The hero's sword, the statesman's task,
Or poet's wreath, or voice of seer,
That men may love and men may fear.

I only ask that Harvard's best
Of truth and honor be your quest;
That following Harvard's highest plan,
Your life be given to God and man.

The world may never read your name
Upon the future's roll of fame:
Enough, my son, if heavenly crown
Be added to your cap and gown.

EARTH TO AIR.

A LITTLE worm on branch of gray
Began his work one summer day;
He planned and built, he wove and spun,
Until his tiny house was done.

He laid the walls with leaf-green rails;
He set the roof with golden nails;
He wove a sheet of softest lace,
And in its folds himself found place.

He slept, and in the dark of night
He dreamed of future wings of light.
The shining house became a veil,
And gone was every golden nail.

Through the thin walls of gauze I spied
The rainbow wings he had not tried;
They cradled close and folded tight
His velvet body, strong and light.

On sped the hours till sleep was done,
Wide swung the doors to life's new sun.
He woke! he longed his wings to try,
And found himself — a butterfly!

No longer measuring slow his way,
No longer shut from light of day,
He does not toil with creeping things,
But floats with birds on happy wings!

WAIT.

All Nature waits the appointed hour,
The seed to start, the bud to flower;
But man, impatient, hurries on,
To lose the cause that might be won.

Calm wisdom ever counsels — Wait!
Time solves the problems of the State;
When seed of righteous cause is sown,
Trust time to show its flower full-blown.

CREMATION.

When wide my prison gates of life are swung,
What will you do with mortal robe that clung
To keep me here? Dear friends, ah! do not lay
That cast-off garment in the ground, I pray,
But let the throbbing white heat of the fire
Leave only ashes on its funeral pyre.
Then say: 'She longed to bring rare beauty here,
To make the desert blossom through the year;
And if, perchance, her dreaming was denied,
The more through death let her be satisfied.'

So, when the fire is out, and ashes white
Are all the mortal remnant left to sight,
Then scatter them upon the garden bed
Where the red rose-tree lifts its lovely head,
And let it say, as deeper red it glows:
'She is not dead; she lives within the rose.'

THE WORLD MADE NEW.

WERE ever songs of birds so sweet?
Were ever skies so fair?
Do you not see the golden haze
That lingers in the air?
Oh, listen to the lark's clear note,
The thrush's roundelay,
And tell me, was there ever known
So beautiful a day?

The brook is singing o'er the stones
Beside the wicket gate;
The cricket chirps, the locust hums,
The robin calls his mate.
And see the golden harvest moon!
It greets the sun's last ray;
Oh, tell me! tell me! when before
Was ever such a day?

Then Graybeard smiled the while he sighed:
'Ah, maiden dear, to you
Sweet love has come with magic power,
And made the whole world new.
For yesterday the skies were fair,
And old is Nature's art;
To-day the world is echoing
The song within your heart.'

THE VISION.

She walked along a stony way,
Up-hill her path the long, long day;
By sharp thorns were her garments torn;
And yet she smiled from night to morn.

She did not know the hill was long,
Her bleeding feet stepped true and strong;
Her hand unshrinking clasped each thorn
And called it rose, of heaven born,

Because — because there went before
A dream that brightened evermore.
She saw the vision of the light,
She felt no pain, she knew no night.

MAHOMET'S CHOICE.

'If I had but two loaves of bread,'
Mahomet said,
'I would sell one, that I might buy
Sweet hyacinths to satisfy
My hungry soul.'

Great Oriental! Prophet wise!
You taught each one of us who fain
By body's dole
Would feed the soul,
That it is gain
When hyacinths he buys,
E'en though he sacrifice
His loaf of bread.

TO A MALACHITE GEODE.

Fair Malachite, our Mother Earth
In silent darkness gave you birth;
Within your geode cradle locked,
On seas of vapor gently rocked,
You slumbered till your velvet heart
Of these gray walls became a part.

But not alone, dear Malachite,
You lived, shut out from earthly light.
To keep you company there grew
A trio bright and fair as you,
And darkness wrapped them with a sheen
That rivals e'en your velvet green.

Still swung within your shadowed nest,
The eons brought you — rare bequest! —
To show that dreams of human heart
Cannot imagine Nature's art.

For when your burnished cradle broke,
And to the light of day you woke,
You stood in velvet, emerald bright,
A miracle in Malachite.

IXTACCIHUATL AND POPOCATEPETL.

Above the mountains ranging low
Two sentries stand in robes of snow
To guard thy beautiful plateau,
O fertile land of Mexico!

The clouds above are not so white
As their fair heads when, silver bright,
The sunshine bathes their snowy height
And decks them with aërial light.

Ixtaccihuatl lies at rest,
By shining clouds her form caressed;
And lingering o'er her snowy breast,
The sun is late to seek the west.

But Popocatepetl wakes,
And from his head the snow-wreath shakes,

While one dark cloud a shadow makes
Through which the sunshine, laughing, breaks.

Hail, guardians of this fair plateau!
Your fires are quenched in drifts of snow;
But yet your eyes, with mystic glow,
Keep prophet's watch o'er Mexico.

APPLE BLOSSOMS.

THE apple tree is white with bloom;
Through Spring air filters soft perfume;
And shadows lie in drifts of pink.
O thirsty soul, come here to drink!

Come, to your weary lips lift up
A draught that brims in memory's cup,
Fragrant with years when, all abloom,
This tree for children's play made room.

It roofed with pink their happy hearts,
And through white rifts sent sunbeam darts;
They had no thought beyond their glee
When sporting 'neath the apple tree.

Alas! my steps have wandered far
From apple bloom and childhood's star;
I had well-nigh forgot the day
That canopied with flowers my play.

But years may pass and bring regret,
Sad thoughts may start the tears,— and yet
My childhood heart returns to me
When blossoms forth the apple tree.

UNTO YOUR ENEMY.

Unto your enemy a kind thought send:
He is no longer enemy, but friend.

JOY.

SWEET Joy on earth is seeking
To find a happy home;
He cares not if to palace
Or cottage he shall come.
He looks in heart of peasant,
He looks in heart of king;
To those who joy are giving
Sweet Joy himself will bring,
And by their hearts' warm firesides
Will sit and smile and sing.

LOTUS.

THE Lotus left old Egypt's sands,
To seek afar in western lands
The answer to the riddle hid
Beneath the ancient pyramid.

A Queen upon the lily bed,
She lifted up her rose-crowned head,
And held in golden cup on high
The seeds first grown for Pharaoh's eye.

'I thought the east was old,' she said,
'I thought its heart a mummy dead;
But in this western world I find
That I was dull — that I was blind.

'As well in orient break the links
That bind the riddle of the Sphinx;
One word has been the Sesame
Prevailing from eternity.

'I look to east — I look to west —
The old — the new — and both are best,
Love knows not time and knows not space,
Egyptian or Caucasian race.

'Love is the word the gray Sphinx hid,
Love built the oldest pyramid;
The riddle of the orient
Hides not its key in occident.

'Its answer comes from centuries past,
Love, old and new — Love, first and last.
The words are by the ages sung:
"The oldest love is ever young."'

THE LOVE THAT FORGIVES.

A BEAUTIFUL love is the love that adores;
It changes life's rocks into smooth sloping shores;
But better 'mid breakers for each one who lives
To cling to the beautiful love that forgives.

The love that adores is a holiday love,
It fails when by trial its weakness we prove;
Then for life's every day thank the Lord when he gives
That crown of his blessings — the love that forgives.

TO-DAY.

WHY fear to-morrow, timid heart?
Why tread the future's way?
We only need to do our part
To-day, dear child, to-day.

The past is written! Close the book
On pages sad and gay;
Within the future do not look,
But live to-day — to-day.

'T is this one hour that God has given;
His *now* we must obey;
And it will make our earth his heaven
To live to-day — to-day.

ORIOLE.

WHILE summer was smiling, the valley
A subtle infusion had made
Of pines, spruces, ferns, fragrant mosses,
And sweet flowers distilled in the shade;
And then between daylight and darkness,
The hour when the heart bows in prayer,
The dew filtered all this quintessence
Of odor to perfume the air.

The fireflies were flashing their lanterns;
A locust his tambourine whirred;
A butterfly gleamed in the roadway,
And never a leaflet was stirred.
A dragon-fly, dressed in her gauzes,
Sped by with a tremulous hum;
And standing erect on a tree-trunk
A woodpecker beat his gray drum.

Then sounded a call from the branches,
Sweet and shrill, from the lark's golden throat;
'T was answered by robin and sparrow,
And last came the oriole's note,—
That rapturous song from the tree-top:
The new moon rose over the hill,
For the oriole sang to her beauty,
And the birds of the forest were still.

ROSES.

O ROSES, are you really white?
And, roses, are you red?
Fair lilies, was your perfume left
Upon the garden's bed?
Where have you hid, O sunshine rays,
Your golden light from me?
Why, sky of azure, never more
As blue as deep blue sea?

'Ah! white and red,'
The roses said;
'And sweet the air
Where lilies fare.'
The sunshine fell
With radiant spell,
And seagulls flew
Through depths of blue.

The lady sighed: 'The world is gray
Since my true lover sailed away.'

IN AIR.

(Orchid. *Cœlogyne Cristata.*)

Fair Orchid, born of earth and air,
In thee hath every season share,—
Spring's subtle thought, and Summer's glow,
The Autumn's incense, Winter's snow.

The mystery of Heaven is thine,
Thou art the angels' flower divine;
All other blossoms are of earth,—
A far-off sphere hath given thee birth.

Thy white form swings on slender stem;
No leaf doth touch thy garment's hem.
Thy radiance to the air is given,—
Earth claims thee not, thou flower of Heaven.

ORCHID.

(*Brassia Verrucosa.*)

From what strange land beyond our ken
Com'st thou, O creature, winged in white?
Art fairy from some distant fen?
Art saint from far-off mountain height?

Or art thou ghost of wandering bird,
Caught on a light stem's green-flushed tips?
Sure never voice hath mortal heard
Like music of thy wind-blown lips!

Perchance thou 'rt butterfly, escaped
From swinging, crimson-flecked cocoon;
Thy pale wings like a crescent shaped
To greet the pallid, crescent moon.

What angel from the clouds bent down
To kiss thy white face floating by,
And hold thee, who wert heaven's own,
And now art half of earth, half sky.

Thou creature of another sphere,
I scarcely breathe lest thou should'st fade?
How can'st thou find companion here,
Where thy white sheen makes all else shade?

Ah, fold thy wings, and loving eyes
Shall watch thy trysting with the moon;
And then, thou darling of the skies,
Fly far, with other joys of June.

CALIFORNIA.

O LAND belovèd of the sea!
In white waves' flowing tide,
By rounding gulf and curving bay,
He lingers at thy side.

O Land belovèd of the sun!
When dawning day is priest,
He lays upon thy mountain shrines
The glory of the east.

Then through thy fields and poppied vales
His sunbeams deck the way,
While on the dials of the world
The shadows mark the day.

O Land belovèd of the flowers,
They laugh with sea and sun,
And perfumed breezes come to ring
Their floral carillon.

O Land where snow's white miracle
  The winters never bring,—
With summer blossoms on your breast,
  Do you forget the spring?

NAUSHON.

'T was Mother Nature's voice that spoke:
Where will you live, O noble Oak?
And you, my Elm and stately Beech,
Cedar and Pine Tree, tell me, each?
Glad winds the answer brought anon,
'Naushon! Naushon! we choose Naushon!'

Where will you stand, O Boulder mine,
Towering in glistening granite fine?
And small white Stones and Pebbles gray,
Where will you gather for your play?
Each rock and pebble thereupon
Replied, 'Naushon! we choose Naushon!'

Where will you dwell, my splendid Deer,
Your great eyes soft with timid fear?
And you, my Faun and gentle Doe,
Tell me, oh, tell! where will you go?
'To dear Naushon!' the brown doe cried.
'Naushon! Naushon!' the deer replied.

My Birds, what happy woods shall ring
With all the songs you love to sing?
And you, O Flowers, where will you bloom,—
Wild Roses, Clover, Yellow Broom?
Birds trilled, flowers rang a carillon:
'Give us an island home — Naushon!'

The trees have grown, as years sped on,
To forests deep upon Naushon,
And birds and flowers and happy deer
Make here their home from year to year;
While ocean tides roll in to play
Around the smoothly curving bay.

But all the beauty, all the grace
That haunt this blessed island place,
Were naught until Love chose his home
Where all the rest rejoiced to come;
For of life's blessings Love is crown,—
Its stars are set upon Naushon.

THE HEART'S SONG.

The pine trees sing it as I pass,
The crickets chirp it in the grass,
The brook in murmuring undertones
Confides the secret to the stones.
I linger, listening, and I hear
The happy song — 'I love you, Dear!'

The tune is rung on lily bells,
And goldenrod the story tells;
The wood-thrush lifts his tiny wings
And breathes his heart out as he sings;
And still the same sweet words I hear —
'I love you, Dear! I love you, Dear!'

O heart, my heart! can it be true,
T is you that make the old song new?
And did you learn it from the rill,
And from the pine trees on the hill?
Or are they echoes that I hear,
And yours the song — 'I love you, Dear!'

THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE.

COUNT not your stumbles, but arise;
God's promises are sure;
Shake all the dust from out your thought,
And leave it clean and pure.

Judge not! not others or yourselves;
Let conscience rest. For ye,
He promises, shall know the truth,—
The truth shall make you free.

LOVE'S POWER.

THE fire is smouldering while the daylight wanes;
Rain taps impatient on the window panes;
The waves roll high, and the cold wind complains.
The wind complains.

Reluctant start the embers to a blaze;
Among the ashy drifts the red coal plays;
In fairy rings the circling smoke delays.
The smoke delays.

Ah, lonely life! it is the wind's sad cry;
Ah, only life! calls Echo, floating by;
Ah, love is life! it is my heart's reply.
My heart's reply.

Burn low, ye fires that on the hearthstone play!
Beat out your life, O waves, in dashing spray!
My heart chants not your monotone to-day.
Oh, not to-day!

I hear no dirge, I see no ashes gray —
Love! love! love! love! its rapture fills the day!
The winter brings to me the bloom of May.
The bloom of May.

GOOD MORNING.

I GREET you from the world's great heart,
And bear its message on.
Good morning! —We are ne'er apart,
Though earth and heaven were done.

I bring you all that life can give —
Its store of joy and rest;
I give you peace of soul to live
Serene within your breast.

And when I crown all these with love —
God's sunshine for life's way —
'Good morning' are the only words
I ever need to say.

MEXICAN SONG.

THE crescent moon is a golden boat,
The old moon is its sail;
In skies of evening we see it float
O'er Guanajuato's vale.

The red, red sky is the boat's fair sea,
And the hills are dark below.
Come, O my Lover, and sail with me,
Wherever our boat may go.

Away, away, to the golden isles
That hide in the clouds' bright vail;
Where skies are azure, and sunlight smiles,
Our beautiful boat will sail.

The red and gold fade out of the sea;
The boat hides under the shore;
Its beautiful crescent for you and for me
Is lost in the Nevermore.

ALWAYS SPRING.

When tiny buds peep o'er the mold,
When willow wands are filled with gold,
When subtle perfume 's in the air,
And hope is smiling everywhere,
Then Nature whispers: 'It is Spring,'
And my heart echoes: 'Spring, sweet Spring!'

When crowding leaves of emerald green
Scarce let blue skies peep in between,
When scarlet poppies droop their heads
In midday sleep on verdant beds,
Then Summer calls the birds to sing,
But my heart says: 'It is the Spring!'

When, carried by the lonely breeze,
A golden shuttle through the trees
Weaves shadows on the crimson vines
And o'er the carpet of the pines,

Then Autumn says: 'Your harvest bring.'
But my heart answers: 'It is Spring!'

When Winter, with her cold white hands,
Locks every stream in icy bands,
My darling, still your dear eyes shine
With heavenly lovelight into mine,
And my glad heart must always sing,
Whate'er the season: 'It is Spring!'

LONG, LONG AGO.

Was it November, dear, or May,
That day of joy — that blessed day —
When o'er the hills we took our way,
Long, long ago?

The fallow fields stretched west and east,
The swinging vines gave purple feast,
The red-robed sumach stood as priest,
Long, long ago.

The breezes through the golden shine
Of sunbeams filtered Autumn's wine;
Deep drank we of the draught divine,
Long, long ago.

There needed not a sage's book
To teach the lesson that we took
From bird and flower and running brook,
Long, long ago.

For, looking in each other's eyes,
We found the oracle's replies
To all the ancient prophecies,
Long, long ago.

And 't was November's gift from May,
That day of joy — that blessed day —
When love walked with us all the way,
Long, long ago.

O BEAUTIFUL DAY.

O BEAUTIFUL day to live in!
The hills in their blue vails of haze,
And the sunshine flooding the valleys
Where the cattle in quiet graze.

O beautiful day to work in!
The air full of heavenly wine,
And the thought of the world working with us,
In strength for the conquest divine.

O beautiful day to love in!
Earth an altar, with Nature the priest,
And the heart like a Moslem low kneeling,
The face of the soul to the east.

THE DAWN OF A DAY.

THE dawn found a rift in the curtains of night,
And laid there her wide silver girdle of light;
She shook out her crimson robe fold upon fold,
And over it drew her long mantle of gold;
The ocean a mirror held up to the sky,
Reflecting the clouds as they floated on high.
The blue islands lifted their heads from the sea,
When the rays of the dawn set their dark shadows free.
The steeds of the sun down the royal road came,
And the breath of their nostrils was blown like a flame,
For they saw the blue hours in their chariot stand,
Opportunity holding each one by the hand;
And they knew the dawn's pomp was but herald to bring
Heaven's gift of a day unto peasant and king.

'I LOVE YOU, DEAR!'

She looked at him with quick surprise,
She looked at him with tear-brimmed eyes;
Her tight-closed hand no motion shaped,
No word her curling lips escaped.
His eyes were bright, his voice was clear;
He only said: 'I love you, Dear!'

Her eyes were deep with anger's hue,
They softened into tender blue;
The haughty curve her lip forsook,
Her hand lay open on her book;
Then as he spoke, he drew more near,
And said again: 'I love you, Dear!'

Where sweet Love dwells, wrath cannot stay;
Her smiles chased all the tears away.
She looked at him: 'Ah, do not fear,
I, too, can say, "I love you, Dear!"'
His smile replied, 'Our hearts are near,'
His words were still: 'I love you, Dear!'

Ah, when the fire of anger burns,
And all life's sweet to bitter turns,—
When eyes are flashing, lips close set,
Prepared to storm and to regret,—
Then happy we if Great Heart near
Have strength to say: 'I love you, Dear!'

ALONE.

I SIT upon a mountain;
No human soul is near;
The forests are beside me,
They are companions here.
The gray stones give me greeting,
Each white cloud smiling sends
Glad message for our meeting,—
I am with friends.

I walk the thronging city,
And countless moving hordes
Of people press against me;
I hear their very words;
I look upon their faces,
My heart can only moan,—
In all these crowded places
I am alone.

JUDGE NOT.

WHEN I was young I saw Life at my feet
With smiling eyes that asked: What should man do?
I said: 'Here lies the path he must go through!
Where I direct, for him to walk is meet.'
My pigmy self as king I thus did treat,
As king for whose approval man must sue.
Ah, blind! that never saw myself untrue
To God, who bares hearts at his mercy seat.
Late have I learned the lesson not to say
'Thus reads the law!' 'So in my brother's place
Would I do!' I know not what were my way,
Except for guidance given of God's good grace.
In changed conditions changed might I have been;
I might have sinned as he, whate'er his sin.

GOD'S CHILDREN.

God gave to me a little child;
'He 's all my own,' I said.
I loved his dainty, rosy feet,
I loved his curly head.

I kept my hand upon his heart,
I watched his every breath.
I feared for him: I prophesied
Disease and pain and death.

He faded while I fondly gazed;
He drooped the while I prayed.
'I cannot sleep! I dream! I fear!
He is my child!' I said.

Then came a heavenly voice: 'Not thine,
But God's,' the angel said.
'He is God's Temple, where love reigns,
Rejoice! be not afraid!

'You rob your darling of God's gifts;
You keep him timid — sad.
Think, work, and pray for others' good,
And let your heart be glad!'

I laid my burden down; I stood
And laughed beneath the sun.
It was as if I had been blind,
And life had just begun.

I took my hand from off my child:
He bloomed like lovely flowers.
I learned that till they 're given to God,
Our children are not ours.

WHY FEAR?

Why should 'st thou misfortune fear,
O soul of mine,
When it may never venture near,
Or shape define?
The body faints beneath a load
It need not bear;
Look up! The stars shine on life's road,—
Stoop not to fear.

WITH GOD.

God doth invite us all to walk with him,—
Not to stand facing him, as if arraigned
Before our judge, with body bending low,
But joyful, as the children of a king
Prince-like to tread at our dear father's side;
His wealth of love and peace and joy our own,
Life set to his in perfect harmony.

Thus as companions, children, helpers, friends,
Erect and glad to meet the world with him,
Doth he invite us by his side to walk.

THE BOOM OF THE LAKE ON THE GRAY SEA WALL.

Some long for the mountains, and some for the sea;
Some sigh for the prairies and wilderness free;
Some dream of the northland and breath of its pines,
Some pray for the southland with fruit-laden vines;
But never a voice to my heart doth call
Like the boom of the lake on the gray sea wall.

Sometimes 'tis a mirror with clouds on its breast,
The sun silvers over their cradle of rest,
The south wind breathes softly the quiet to keep,
And evening weaves gently her mantle of sleep;
Then, standing alone, solemn, stately, and tall,
A fortress-like guard is the gray sea wall.

But hark! from the north comes a furious blast;
The east wind to meet it is hurrying past;
The waves leap forth madly the tempest to greet,
The storm-king triumphant sees earth at his feet;
And far up the north shore there sounds over all
The boom of the lake on the gray sea wall.

In lands far away though my footsteps may roam,
My thoughts swiftly hasten to seek a dear home
That memory brings in her beautiful dreams
Where white waves curl over the sun's golden beams;
Then answers my heart to a rapturous call,
The boom of the lake on the gray sea wall.

MILTON HILL.

THE prettiest mats were ever seen
Are Mrs. Cunningham's mats of green!
She would n't lay beside her door,
Or on the garden's level floor,
A dry, dead thing of jute or hair,
Or fur that frozen creatures wear!
No! no! she calls the sunbeam's light,
And welcomes dewdrops in the night;
And when gray clouds droop far and wide,
She shows the raindrops where to hide.
Then woof of earth and warp of green,
By sunbeam shuttles thrown between,
Are netted into grassy blade
And into clover triads made,
Until at last the velvet mass
Becomes a padded square of grass;
And when your footsteps hither stray,
I know that you will surely say:
'The prettiest mats were ever seen
Are Mrs. Cunningham's mats of green.

MY NEIGHBOR.

Tell me the good of my neighbor,
Make me his lover;
What there is evil, unaided
I shall discover.
Better might I to his failings
Know only blindness,
For they may surely be hidden
Under his kindness.
Then over errors and weakness
Draw me a cover;
Tell me the good of my neighbor,
Make me his lover.

SONG FOR A GOLDEN WEDDING.

Sing for the golden sunshine,
Sing for the golden moon;
Sing for the golden roses,
Fragrant on breath of June.
Sing for the golden maples,
Sing for the golden mine,
Sing for the golden berries,
Clustered on waving vine.
Then over prairie and desert gray,
Over the mountain and sea away,
Sing for a golden wedding-day.

Vows that were slowly spoken
Once in the bygone past,
Speed now to give a token
Life is the best at last;
For with true hearts united,
Love ever close beside,

Yearly new faith was plighted,
Bridegroom again wooed bride.
Then over prairie and desert gray,
Over the mountain and sea away,
Sing for a golden wedding-day.

Seeking at end of rainbow
Magical pot of gold,
Question the wide world over –
None has the secret told;
Yet have these fond hearts learned it—
Truth as the heavens old—
Life is itself the rainbow,
Love is the pot of gold.
Then over prairie and desert gray,
Over the mountain and sea away,
Sing for a golden wedding-day.

CORONADO.

A QUEEN there is whose kingdom lies
Beside the sea 'neath southern skies;
And lovers come from every zone
To kneel before her wave-washed throne.

She wears a shining coronet,
With sky-born stars its points are set;
And Heaven to her for emblem gave
The crescent shaped in every wave —
The crescent far as eye can reach,
In curving sands around the beach.

'And I will set another sign,'
Said Heaven, 'on this brow of thine!'
Then watchers saw in twilight skies
The fair, young, golden moon arise;
She held the old moon's ghost in air,
And set her gleaming crescent there.

The islands could no longer wait;
They stood before the Silver Gate:
'Swing, swing upon your flowing tide;
The sky is near — the sea is wide;
The crescent arches in our caves,
The crescent shines upon our waves;
We wear the royal gold and green,
As servants of our high-born Queen.
What is her name — the noble one
Who sits belovèd on her throne?'

The white gulls rested on the wing,
And sky and sea were listening;
Each mountain stood, a solemn priest,
Before the altar of the east;
Each hill, a waiting acolyte,
Attended the baptismal rite;
And silence reigned, until there came
Through ringing air the royal name:
'Thou, Coronado, thou shalt be
The Queen of Earth — the Queen of Sea!'

So, Coronado, crownèd one,
Thy lovers come from every zone

To see the royal coronet
That Heaven upon thy brow hath set;
And when that crescent once is seen,
Hearts everywhere proclaim thee Queen.

HYMN.

Lord, far beyond desert of mine
The love that on my life doth shine,
That shelters me in darkest night,
And blesses every morning light.

The changing seasons round the years,
Joy brings her smiles and grief her tears;
But whether smiles or tears prevail,
Thy boundless love doth never fail.

Oh, keep my spirit undefiled;
Help me to be thy trusting child;
And on this loving heart of mine,
Lord, let thy love forever shine.

NINETIETH PSALM.

LORD, thou hast been our dwelling-place
Through generations past;
Before the mountains were brought forth,
While earth was chaos vast;
Thou art from everlasting known
To everlasting — God alone.

A thousand years within thy sight
Are but as yesterday
When it is past; — or like a watch
That measureth night away.
As with a flood thou carriest them,
They are as sleep that falls on men.

Like grass are they, that, flourishing,
In morning hours is found;
At eventide it is cut down,
And withereth on the ground.
Thine anger doth our souls consume,
Thy wrath doth fill our hearts with gloom.

Our days are three-score years and ten;
Like oft-told tale those years.
Though strength should four-score number them,
They are but work and tears;
For life is soon cut off, and then
We fly, and know not where or when.

So teach us, Lord, to count our days
That we find wisdom's heart.
Return! with mercy satisfy!
Let gladness be our part.
According to our time of fears,
May we rejoice through all our years.

Unto thy servants' eyes, dear Lord,
Let all thy work appear;
Thy glory to their children show,
That love may conquer fear.
Our handiwork do thou make strong,
And let thy beauty be our song.

FEBRUARY.

Pan's pipes are laid in roots and twigs,
And through the vines are bent;
Spring calls his eager lips to press
The wondrous instrument.

To hear this heavenly symphony,
Rise, Soul, from depths of woe;
Speak, Seer, and make me wise as flowers,
Who well their birthdays know.

Tell me how Pan makes sun, wind, clouds,
Obedient to his power;
Tell me why green fills every leaf,
And color every flower.

O wise man! break a stem, and show
The marvellous liquid green; —
A violet's heart, — that I may watch
Its purple-flowing stream.

Show me the pink-filled fountain where
  Arbutus goes to drink;
Show me the snows that come to pale
  The lily on its brink.

Then, O thou wisest man! distill,
  If thou hast secret power,
That I may learn the magic art —
  The perfume of the flower.

And tell me why the violet's breath
  The lily never knows;
And why the lily's never dwells
  Within the glowing rose.

Yet, Sage, speak not! These secrets, hid
  In flower, in leaf, in sod,
Half-fathomed by our human hope,
  Must still be left with God.

APRIL.

I LEANED from my window one morning,
I heard a low laugh in the air;
The birds gave a soft note of warning —
A moment, and she will be there!
Oh, who is this charmer retreating
As if our desire she eludes?
Her raindrops, our plans all defeating,
Are pattering down in the woods.

I watch her — the beautiful maiden!
The sun brings her wandering smile,
The breeze with her whisper is laden,
The willows her favor beguile.
Her vail of gray mist on the mountains,
Her scarf of pale green o'er the trees;
She breaks all the chains of the fountains,
They rush down to seek the far seas.

Her jewels she brings from a palace
Well guarded by knights of the sun;
She weeps, and they offer a chalice
Where colors from teardrops are spun;
She smiles, and their arrows quick darting
Through woof of that fabric of dreams,
The arch of the rainbow is starting,—
Her smiles and her tears are its beams.

I lean from my window at evening,
I hear a low murmur afar;
And is earth her jewels receiving,
Or is it the gleam of a star?
O April! capricious yet tender,
The bridesmaid of Winter and Spring,
The Summer her homage may render,
But yours is the gift of the ring.

JUNE.

HARK! a new comer!
Lo! it is Summer!
Pan sets his pipes to her tune;
Down by the river
Reeds are a-quiver,
Waiting — all waiting for June.

No longer hidden,
Wild flowers are bidden
Censers to swing 'neath the moon;
Night is resplendent,
Stars are attendant,
Waiting — all waiting for June.

Summer insisting,
Calls to her trysting
Forests with green's royal boon;
Breezes compelling,
Bird carols swelling,
Waiting — all waiting for June.

Soft airs perfuming,
Roses are blooming,
Red in the sunshine of noon;
Snowy in whiteness,
Golden in brightness,
Waiting — all waiting for June.

White clouds low sailing
Watch her unavailing,
River and sea sing her rune;
Robed in rare splendor,
Regal yet tender,
Earth crowns the Summer with June.

SEPTEMBER.

While summer days grew brown and old,
A wizard delved in mines of gold;
No idler he,— by night, by day,
He smiled and sang and worked away.
And, scorning thrift, with lavish hand
He cast his gold across the land.

The maples caught it ere it fell;
Witch-hazel turned before its spell;
The goldenrod's high plumes of green
Were feathered with its yellow sheen;
While barberry bush and bitter-sweet
Wore berries golden as the wheat.

Still smiling, o'er the trees he wound
Long russet scarfs with crimson bound;
He drew a vail of purple haze
O'er distant hills where cattle graze;
He bathed the sun in amber mist,
And steeped the sky in amethyst.

Low in the east, for crowning boon
He hung the golden harvest moon;
And donned his coat of frosty white
As twilight deepened into night.
Then to the roll-call of the year
September answered: 'I am here!'

OCTOBER.

THE trees hold russet tankards
For Autumn's sparkling wine;
Ere purple grapes are broken
Upon the swinging vine,
The breezes bring for token
The breath of spices fine.

Afar upon the hillside
The sumach's torches flame;
The green of Summer spurning,
The stately maples claim
A crimson flag whose burning
Waves high a golden name.

The sword of great Orion
Guards well the cup at night;
O'er moon and stars in splendor
Aurora swings her light,
While Earth again doth tender
Her potion of delight.

Oh, press it to your lips, dear,
October's glowing bowl,
O'er perfumed lips it offers,
With fire of altar's coal,
A draught whose rich depth proffers
Elixir for the soul.

GOOD-BYE, OLD YEAR.

THE Christmas Day came dressed in green,
The New Year dressed in white;
The blue lake smiled upon them both,
To match the sun's delight.
The birds flew swift across the sky:
'Come, New Year! Old Year, go!'
We say good-bye to flush of green,
And hail the drifts of snow.
We greet you both with smile and sigh —
When New Years come, Old Years must fly;
And so, Old Year, good-bye, good-bye!

'AS A MAN THINKETH.'

'As a man thinketh, so is he';
Right thought builds true and strong;
Let passion rule, and he is torn
By forces turned to wrong.

For evil poisons. Malice shafts
Like boomerangs return,
Inflicting wounds that will not heal
While rage and anger burn.

But good may ever conquer ill,
Health walk where pain has trod:
'As a man thinketh, so is he'—
Rise then, and think with God.

SUNNY BRAE.

I KNOW a trellis where the flowers
Give scarcely room for leaves,
And where an interlacing vine
Its shadow network weaves.

The pink rose reaches high to catch
The golden sun's first beam;
The white rose lingers till the morn
Brings down its bridal dream.

The yellow rose no longer seeks
The kisses of the sun;
His colors glowing on her cheek
Are trophies she has won.

The golden honeysuckle blows
From out his trumpet cup
A perfume such as Araby
Could never offer up.

The roses from the trellis bend
The stately palm to greet;
And whisper secrets to the hedge,
Of sister roses sweet.

Upon the lawn the Temple Oak,
With noble arms outspread,
Breathes benediction on each one
Who loves his green-crowned head.

Within the home the stranger finds
A joyous welcoming;
Good-will 's the 'Open Sesame
At which the wide doors swing.

But would you know the fairest flower
That perfumes every day?
'T is heartsease, blooming 'neath the roof
Of blessed Sunny Brae.

TWILIGHT.

When shadows of evening were falling,
I stole to the valley alone;
And close by the beautiful brookside
I rested upon a gray stone.

The ferns to the water were bending,
The touch-me-nots crept to its edge;
And mosses and lichens, embracing,
Climbed up to the shale's sharpened edge.

Then spilled out of Araby's chalice
A love philter over the hill,
And the green valley yielded a perfume
That only the dew can distill.

There rose above all the song vespers
Of robin and sparrow and thrush,
And the oriole's chords and harmonics
Thrilled out from the tall maple bush.

Antiphonal in his responses,
The lark hailed the last ray of light;
And then from the forest cathedral
There came the Amen of good-night.

LAKE TO SKY.

One winter day
The lake lay gray
Beneath the shining sky;
And white clouds flew
Across the blue,
As winds went sweeping by.

Then said the lake:
'Ah, blue sky, take
My gray — give me your blue!
Let white clouds rest
Upon my breast,
With sunshine filtering through!'

And so in gray
That winter day,
With never cloud to break,
The quiet sky
Arched still and high
Above the happy lake.

While far below,
Like silver snow,
Clouds drifted wide apart;
And through each break
The blue, blue lake
Revealed the sky's blue heart.

WE TWO.

Two little words my heart has sung
Since years were few and life was young.
'T was you, my wife, who set the tune
One happy May — or was it June?
No matter, since it was love's spring;
'We two!' the words you bade me sing.

'We two!' I looked into your eyes,
And to all doubts found sweet replies;
The future seemed an open way,
The light upon it, heaven's own ray;
And on your hand I slipped a ring;
'We two! we two!' I heard it sing.

Beloved wife, through all the years
Your smile has ever banished fears;
Your eyes have seen hope's golden star,
Your love has shone from near and far.
Ah, in life's youth I little knew
The blessed meaning of 'We two.'

I learned it well in time of grief,
When your dear presence brought relief;
I learned it well when by your side
My deepest joys were multiplied;
Until to-day, dear wife and true,
Life only means 'We two! we two!'

THE LETTER.

Her heart was its forerunner;
She knew that he would speak;
Already had he won her
When blushes dyed her cheek.

At last she held his letter;
Its words — ah! did she guess?
Before she broke its fetter,
Her heart had answered 'Yes!'

OLD PROVERBS IN A NEW DRESS.

Be prompt. The tardy habit grows,
And gets a sound berating;
For people always count the faults
Of those who keep them waiting.

French.

The Devil boldly walks abroad
By night and day;
But when he finds the door fast shut,
He goes away.

Spanish.

When the web is well begun
No need then to dread
That it will be left undone:
God will send the thread.

Italian.

When God bids thee draw a load,
Rope he lays beside the road.
When he says that thou shalt ride,
Then a horse he doth provide.

Danish.

The best man's faults upon his forehead written
Would make him pull hat over eyes — shame-
smitten.

Gælic.

Would you be fragrant? Choose a place
Where fragrance you will meet,
For he who dwells
By one who sells
Sweet perfumes will be sweet.

Arabian.

Man is not just till he divines
That God writes straight on crooked lines.

Spanish.

There is never a road that is long,
When we know at its end
Stands the house of a friend;
For the heart as it goes sings a song.

Danish.

Confide a secret to a man that 's dumb —
'T will make him speak, for out 't is bound to
come.

Livonian.

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